

A Conduit of Comfort.

Preached at *Saint James* before the
Commissionsers of the Vnion
of the Realmes.

By *W. Conper*,
Minister of Gods word.

The Lord is my Comforter.



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A CONDVI OF COMFORT.

Rom. 8. 28.

*Also we know that all thinges worke together for
the best, to them that loue God; euen to them
who are called according to his purpose.
My helpe is in the name of the Lord.*



His Chapter may be con- This Chapter
ueniently rearmed, *A Com* is a compende
pnde of Christian consolation; of Comfort.
for, whereas many kindes
of comfortes, are dispersed
throughout the holy Scrip-
tures, for the strengthening
of the man of God, some of
euery kind are heere gathe-
red together in one, and like chosen Flowers picked
out of the Garden of God, are knitt together in one
bunch, and presented to thee, who art a Christian.

There are two thinges onely which trouble vs in The summe
this life. The first, is the remanents of sinne in our and deuision
corrupt nature: this was such a matter of grieve to of this Chap-
the holy Apostle, that it made him to cry out; *O mi-* ter.
serable man that I am, who shall deliuer me from this body Rom. 7. 24.
of death? So despleasant was it to him to liue in that
body, wherein he found the motions of sinne rebel-
ling against the law of his God. And if the Apostle
accounted this burthen so waightie to him, Alas

A 2.

how

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Esa. 38. 15. how should we complaine? and what cause haue we with *Ezechia* to walke weakely in the bitternesse of our soules all our dayes; in whom the life and power of that sinning sinne is tarre lesse restrained? Yet least wee should be so cast downe with the sense of sinne, that we despeare & perish, being swallowed vp with griefe: the Lord furnisheth vs with many comforts against it, frō the beginning of this Chap. to the middest of the 17. verse. The other thing which may discourage vs, is the manifold troubles which follow vs in the following of Christ.

Cant. 2, 2. For our Lord is like a *Lillie among Thornes*, and as an *Apple tree among the trees of the Forrest*: If wee delight to sit vnder his shadow; and if his Fruite be sweete in our mouth, wee must be content to walke toward him through many sharpe afflictions; therefore are we commaunded not only to suffer afflictions as the good Souldiers of Iesus Christ, but also to reioyce in tribulations; and if we cannot attaine to that perfection, at the least to count it exceeding ioy when we fall into diuerse temptations: Yet because no chastisement is sweete for the present, it hath pleased the Lord of his fatherly indulgence, and pity toward our weakenesse, to seyson the cupp of our bitter griefes, with his sweete comforts; which as he doth in many other partes of holy Scripture, so specially from the 17. verse of this Chapter, to the 30. wherein the Apostle aboundes with consolation; shewing himselfe a faythfull Steward in the house of God, most carefull to lead as it were by the hand, the weary Sonnes and Daughters of the liuing God, into the Lords Wine-sellers there to refresh and stay vs with the *Flagons of his wine*, and to comfort vs with his *Apples*; to strengthen vs with his *hid Manna*, and to make vs merry with that *Milke and Hony*, which our immortall Husband Iesus Christ, hath prouided for

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for vs to sustaine vs, if wee faint not through these manifold tribulations, wherewith we are compassed in this barren Wildernesse.

That this is the Apostles purpose, and order of proceeding in this Chapter, I thinke his conclusion makes it manifest, which you haue from the 31. verse to the end; wherein he drawes all that he had sayd, into a short summe, conteyning the glorious triumph of a Christian, ouer all his enemies: the triumph is first set downe generally in the vers. 31. *What shall we say then to these things: If God be with vs, who can be against vs?* thereafter hee partes this generall in two: there is (would he say) but one of two that are against vs; either sinne, or affliction: as to sinne, he triumphes against it, verse 33. and 34. *Who will lay any thing to the charge of Gods chosen? It is God that iustificieth, Who shall condemne? It is Christ, who is dead, or rather who is risen againe, who is also at the right hand of God, and makes request for vs.* As to Affliction, hee begins his triumph against it, verse 35. *Who shall separate vs from the loue of Christ?* his answere mountes vp by a gradation, *Will tribulation, or anguish do it? yea, will death it selfe do it? or that which is much more; Will Principalities and Powers do it?* no: in all these things we are more then conquerours, through him that loued vs: *Thankes therefore be vnto our God, who alwayes makes vs to triumph in our Lord Iesus Christ.*

Now in this verse, as Iacob gaue his sonnes his greatest blessing in the last roome, so the Apostle giueth to Christians his greatest comfort in the last roome, wherof this is the Summe: Our afflictions are so far from being preiudiciall to our saluation, that by the contrary, through the Lords marueilous working, they tend to the aduancement thereof, & he enlarges the comfort: Not only afflictions, but, all other things workes for the best together, to them that loue the Lord.

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The partes of the Verse are two: the first conteynes the comfort: the second, a description of the persons to whom the comfort appertaineth. Now I come to the wordes.

Also, that is, besides all the comfortes which I haue giuen to you before, I giue you yet this further, learning vs, that albeit our troubles be many, yet our comforts are more. *Many* (sayth *Dauid*) are the troubles of the righteous: but the Lord deliureth him out of them all. As if he would say, for euery trouble, the Lord hath a seuerall deliuerance. Euery temptation (sayth the Apostle) hath the owne issue. Euery horne that riseth against vs to push vs, hath attending vpon it an hammer to repress it, (saith the Prophet.)

Our troubles are many, but our comforts are more then our troubles.
Psal. 34. 19.
1. Cor. 10. 13.
Zach. 1. 21.
2. Cor. 1. 3.
Luk. 6. 38.
1. Cor. 2. 9.

Esau mourned vpon his father *Isaac*: although he was prophane, yet he cried pitiufully, *Haſt thou but one Bleſſing my Father?* But wee (with the holy Apostle) may blesse our heauenly Father, who comforteth vs so in all our tribulations; that as the sufferings of Christ abound in vs, so our consolations abound through Christ: not one, but manifold are his blessings; and the storehouse of his consolations, can neuer be emptied. The Lord our God hath not dealt rigardly nor sparingly with vs, but a good measure of consolations, pressed downe and running ouer hath he giuen to vs in our bosome; his name be prayed therefore: and yet how little is all this that we now receiue, in comparison of these inestimable ioyes of God, that he hath prepared for vs: the like whereof the eye neuer saw, the eare neuer heard of, and the heart can not vnderstand: Surely the greatest measure of comfort that we haue in this life, is but the earnest penny of that principall, which shalbe giuen to vs hereafter: If the earnest be so great, what shalbe the principall? If the first fruites of the Heauenly *Canaan* be so delectable, how shall the

the

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the full masse thereof abundantly content vs, when we shall behold the face of our God in righteousness, and shalbe satisfied with his image; when we shalbe filled with the fulnesse of ioy, which is in his presence, and with those pleasures which are at his right hand for euer-more?

Wee know. If you ponder the Apostles words, you shall finde, that by an Emphasis, hee restraynes this knowledge to the Children of God, excluding Worldlings and Naturalistes from it. *The spirituall man discerneth all things: but hee himselfe is iudged of no man.* A naturall man can not understand the things that are of God. The Gospell is *Wisedome* indeede; but *Wisedome* in a misterie; and *Wisedome* among them that are perfect. Euery Article of our Fayth, & poynt of Christian doctrine: euery priuilege of a Christian, is a Misterie: therefore no maruaile that the Gospel be foolishnesse to the Naturall man, who perisheth: And this doth draw vs to consider that the excellent things of Christianitie, can be knowne of none, but of those that possesseth them. The value, or rather vanitie of earthly Iewels, hath bin better knowne of some that neuer inioyed them, then of them who possesseth them; but the Iewels of Gods kingdome, such as *Peace, Righteousnesse, ioy in the Holy Ghost*, can be knowne of none but of the Christian onely, who inioyes them. The *new Name*, giuen to the Christian, who can know but hee that hath it? and none can know what is the sweetnes of *hid Manna*, except he taste it: therefore saith the Psalmist, *Taste and consider how gracious the Lord is*: telling you that the graciousnesse of the Lord, can not be considered by him who neuer did taste it. If you goe and speake to a Worldling of inward Peace, of Spirituall ioy, or of the priuiledges of a Christian, you shall seeme to him a *Barbarian*, or one that speaketh a strange language which

The Priuiledges of a Christian, can not be knowne of them, who do not possesseth them.

1. Cor. 2. 14.

15.

1. Cor. 2. 7.

1. Cor. 2. 6.

Reue. 2. 17.

Psal. 34. 8.

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which he vnderstandeth not; or if he him selfe speake of them which he sees learnedly hearing or reading, yet shal he speake like a bird, vitering voyces which she vnderstandeth not. As the brute Beast knoweth not the excellencie of a mans life, and therefore delighteth it selfe with Hey and Prouander, seeking no better; because it knoweth no better. So the Naturall man knoweth not the excellencie of a Christian, and therefore disdaines him, counting him a foole, a madd man, and the offspring of the world: he taketh the Dung of the earth in his armes for his inheritaunce: let him brooke the portion of *Esau*, that the *fatnesse of the earth may be his dwelling place*: let his Wine and his Wheate abound to him, hee cares for no more: he knowes not what it is to haue his Soule made glad with the light of the countenance of God. This is your miserable condition, O yee wretched worldlings, yee are cursed with the curse of the Serpent; yee creepe as it were on your bellies, and licke the dust of the eath all the dayes of your life: yee haue not an eye to looke vp to heauen, nor a heart to seeke those thinges which are about; most fearefull is your estate: wee warne you of it, but it is the Lord who must deliuer you from it.

This resolute knowledge is the mother of spirituall courage, constancie, and patience: therefore the Apostle vrgeth it in this place, that the Christian may be made thereby strong, and patient in tribulation: and indeed what needes him feare in the euill day, yea though the Earth should be remooued, and the Mountaines fall into the midst of the Sea: who knoweth that the Lord sitteth on his Throne, hauing the world as a glasse Sea before him, gouerning all the walterings, changes, & euent of things therein, to the good of them that loue him? Oh that we had profited so much in the schoole of Christ all our dayes,

Act. 26. 24.

1. Cor. 4. 13.

Gen. 27. 39.

Psal. 4. 7.

Gen. 3.

Coloss. 3. 1.

Resolute
knowledge is
the mother of
patience.

Psal. 42.

Rom. 4.

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dayes, that without doubting, or making any exception, we could belecue this which heere the Apostle layeth for a most sure ground of comfort, that so we might change all our thoughts and cares into one; namely, how to grow in the loue of God, that in a good conscience we might say to the Lord with *Peter, Lord thou knowest I loue thee.* And as the rest of our feares, griefes, & temptations, which many times do so compasse vs, that to our iudgements, wee can see no out-gate: cast all the burthen of them vpon the Lord, who careth for vs; and hath giuen vs this promise for a Premunire: *All comes for the best. Psal. 37.*

The Souldier with courage entred into the Battaille, vnder hope to obtaine the victorie. The Mariner with boldnesse committeth himselfe to the stormie Seas, vnder hope of vantage: and euery man hazardeth in his calling; and yet are they all but vncertanie venturers, and knowes not the end: But the Christian, runnes not as vncertaine; but as one sure to obtaine the Crowne: for he knowes that the God of peace, shall shortly tread Satan vnder his feete. What then? *1. Cor. 9. 26. Rom. 16. 20.*

shall hee not with courage enter into that battaille, wherein he is made sure ore euer he fight; that all the Warriours of Iesus shall become more then Conquerours through him? If we will onely stand still, we shall see the saluation of the Lord. Gideon & his 300, fought against the great Hoste of Midian without feare, because he was sure of victorie. *Rom. 8. 37. Exod. 14. 13.*

David made haste, and ran to encounter with Goliath, because he was perswaded, the Lord would deliuer him into his handes. The Israelites spared not to enter into the Flood of Iorden, because they saw the Arke of God before them, deuiding the waters: And shall only the Christian stand astonished in his temptations, notwithstanding the word of God goe before him to resolute him, that what foeuer sal out, shall worke for the best vnto him? *1. Sam. 17. 48. Ios. 3. 16.*

The Lord
B. increase

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increase vs, and make vs abound more and more in loue of our God; for perfect loue casteth out feare. The Lord strengthen our Fayth, that through these mistie cloudes of afflictions, which now compasseth vs, we may see that comfortable end, which the light of God hath discovered vnto vs.

Iudge not of
Gods working
before the
end, for that
doth greatly
impaire our
comfort.

But wee are to beware of the subtile sleights of Satan, who to the end, he may spoyle vs of this comfort in trouble, endeauoreth by many meanes, either else to quench this light of God in our mindes; or else to darken and obscure it by the precipitation of our vnbeleeuing heartes, carrying vs headlong to iudge of the workes of God, by their beginnings; and to measure our selfe in trouble, by our present estate and condition, not suffering vs to tarry while wee see the end; whereof it comes to passe, that our heartes beeing tossed too and fro with restless perturbation, like trees of the Forrest shaken with the wind; in our necessities, wee hasten to be our owne prouisors: in our dangers, wee wilbe our owne deliuerers, and every way we become the caruers of our owne perdition: wee haue so much the more to beware of this precipitation, because the dearest seruants of God haue fallen through it, into fearefull sinnes against the Lord their God, and breed great vnquietnesse vnto them selues. When *Dauid* was in extreame danger in the wildernes of *Maon*, he said in his feare, that all men were liers. O what a blasphemie! that doing the promises of God, made to him by *Samuel* the Lords Prophet, were but lyes: and how many times thought hee (in his other troubes) that God had forgot to be mercifull, and had shut vp his tender mercies in displeasure: But when he saw the end, then was he compelled to accuse him selfe, to giue glory to God, & to say: *I should haue beene dumbe, and not opened my mouth, because thou didest it: I sayd it*

Psal. 116. 11.

Psal. 77. 9.

Psal. 39. 9.

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in my feare, but now I see, *Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his Saints.* As this precipitation made *Dauid* to stumble & fall, so will it carry vs also to the like inconuenience too, except we beware of it: For if we should looke to *Lazarus* in the dunghill full of Byles & Sores, hauing no comfort, but from the Dogges, and compare him with the *Rich man* clothed in Purple, and fareing daintily euery day, What can we iudge, but that *Lazarus* is the most miserable of the two? yet tarry while the Lord haue ended his worke, and *Lazarus* be conueyed to *Abrahams* bo-
some, and the *Rich glutton* be gone to his place, then shall the trueth appeare manifestly: *All things worke together for the best, to them that loue God.* Let vs learne therefore to measure the euent of things, not by their present condition, but by the prediction of Gods word, Let vs cleaue to his Promise, and waite on the *Visiō* which hath his owne time appoynted, it shall
speake at the last, and shall not lie: though it tarry, let vs waite for it, it shall surely come, and not stay. Let vs goe into the *Sanctuarie* of God, and consider the end; there shall we find and learne, that there is no peace to the
Wicked, howsoeuer they flourish for a time; and that it can not be, but well with them that feare the Lord. Marke the upright man, and behold the Iust; for the end of that man is peace: but the transgressors shalbe destroyed together, and the end of the Wicked shalbe cut off: So both in the troubles of the Godly, and prosperitie of the Wicked, are we bound to suspend our judgment, till we see the end.

All things worke together. O what a singular pri-
uiledge hath the Christian, that not onely Afflictions, but all things whatsoever workes for the best: and not onely so, but they worke together for the best to him. Many working instrumentes is there in the world, their course is not one, they communi-

Luk. 16. 19.

Abac. 2. 3.

Psal. 37. 37.

Many working
instrumentes
of contrarie
qualities and
intentions in
the world, yet
agrees all in
one end.

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rate no counsels, yea, their intentions oftentimes are contrary; yet the Lord brings all their wayes to this one ende, *To the good of them that loue him.* Where ~~can~~ they be, in regard of place: what euer they be, in regard of persons: what euer their purposes be, how soeuer disagreeing amongst them selues; yet such is the power and providence of that supreme gouernour our heavenly Father, that *All of them, workes together to the good of them that loue him.* And herein doth his Power and Wisedome appeare more cleerely, then in the tempering of this great vniuerse, making Elements of so contrary qualities to meete together, & agree in one pleasant harmony. For the illustration of this, let vs marke but one example for all, *Iacob* sendes his sonne *Ioseph* to *Dothan*, to visite his brethren; his brethren castes him into the *Pitt*, *Reuben* relieues him, the Marchants of *Midian* buyes him, and selles him againe to *Potiphar*, his Mistris accuses him, his Maister condemnes him, the Butler (after long ingratitude) recommedes him, and *Pharaoh* exaltes him. O what Instruments are heere! and how many handes are about this one poore man of God: but how doth the Lord direct them all? yea, beside their owne intention to further *Iosephs* aduancement in *Egipt*, for his owne good, and the good of his Church. But now to the particulars.

All the wayes
of God, yea
euen when to
walke stub-
bornly against
his children,
are for the
best to them.

There is nothing in the world which workes not for our weale: All the workes of God, all the stratagems of Satan, all the imaginations of man, are for the weale of Gods Children; yea, out of the most poysonable thinges, as Siane and Death, doth the Lord draw healthsome and medicinall preseruatiues, *to them that loue him.*

All the wayes of the Lord (sayth *Dauid*) *are Mercie and Trueth.* Marke what he sayth, and make not thou

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thou an exception, where God hath made none : *Psal. 25.*
All, none excepted. But be thou strengthened in
Fayth, and giue glory to God, saying with the pa- *Iob. 13. 15.*
tient *Iob* : *Albeit the Lord would slay mee, yet will I*
trust in him.

Sometime the Lord walkes in the way of anger,
seeming angrie with his Children, and to walke
stubbornly against them, which hath mooued them
to powre out the like of these pittifull Lamentes.
The arrowes of the Almighty are vpon me; (sayth Iob) the Iob. 6. 4.
venime whereof doth drinke up my spirit, and the terrors
of God fight against mee: Thou settest mee up as a marke
against thee, and makest mee a burden to my selfe. Thy
indignation lyeth vpon mee; (sayth David) Yea from my Psal. 88. 7. 15
youth I haue suffered thy terrors, doubting of my life.
For feiucie, I haue had bitter griefe, (sayd Ezechia) for Esa. 38. 17.
the Lord like a Lion, brake all my bones, so that I did char-
ter like a Swallow, and mourne like a Dove. I am trou-
bled on euery side, (sayth the Apostle) hauing fightings 2. Cor. 7. 5.
without, and terrors within: And yet in all these, the
Lord hath a secret way of mercie, wherein he walkes
and workes for the comfort of his Children; which
albeit for the present wee can not perceiue, and can Iob. 13. 24.
see no other, but the Lord hath taken vs for his ene-
mies: yet in the ende, wee shalbe compelled to ac-
knowledge it, and confesse, with David: O good Psal. 119.
was it for mee, O Lord! that euer thou correctest mee:
Therefore also sayd the Apostle, The Lord is mar- 2. Thes. 1. 10
uelous in his Saints. And the Apostle cryed out,
O the deepenesse of the riches both of the Wisdome and Rom. 11. 35.
Knowledge God! how vnsearchable are his iudgements,
and his wayes past finding out! His glorie is great
when hee worketh by meanes; his glorie is greater
when he worketh without meanes: but his glorie
shineth most brightly, when he worketh by con-
traries.

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The Lord
workes by
meanes, with-
out meanes, &
by contraries:
and then is his
glory greatest

It was a great worke that hee did open the eyes of the blind man: but greater, that he did by application of Spittle and Clay, such meanes as are meet to put out the eyes of the seeing man, then to restore the sight to a blind man. So he wrought in the first Creation, causing Light to shine out of Darknes: So also in the worke of Redemption: for by cursed Death, hee brought happy Lyte: by the Crosse, hee obtayned the Crowne: and through Shame, he went to Glory: And this same order, the Lord keeps yet in the worke of our second Creation, which is our Regeneration; hee casteth downe, that he may raise vp; hee killeth, & hee makes aliue: hee woundes, and hee will binde vp: hee woundes, and hee will heale: hee accuseth his children of sinnes, that so they may get remisse of their sinnes: hee troubleth their Consciences, that so he may pacifie them: and in a word, the meanes which he vseth in working, are contrary to the worke it selfe, which he intendes to performe towards his Children. Hee sent a fearefull Darknesse on *Abraham*, but afterward communicated to him a ioyfull Light: hee wrestled with *Isaac*, and shooke him too and fro; but in the end blessed him: hee stroke the Apostle *Paul* with blindnes, and then opened his eyes, that he might know the Lord Iesus: hee frownes for a while vpon his owne, as *Ioseph* did vpon his Brethren; but in the end with a louing affection shall he embrace them: hee may seeme angry at thy Prayers, as hee put backe the Petition of the Woman of *Canaan*; but at length, will graunt a fauourable answer to them: therefore let vs learne to possesse our soules in patience; let the Lord worke by any meanes it pleaseth him: It is enough that wee know, *All the wayes of God*, yea euen when he dealeth most hardly with his Children, are mercy, and tendes to the good of those that loue him.

Hos. 6.

Gen. 43.

Math. 15. 22

And

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And as to Satans stratagems, it is also out of doubt, *that they worke for the best, to them that loue the Lord;* All Satans stratagems, worke for the best to the godly.
not according to his purpose in deed, but because the Lord trappeth him in his owne snare. If vnder the Serpents shape he deceiued *Adams*, vnder the Serpents name shall the Lord curse him: and all these weapons whereby he intendes to destroy the worke of Gods grace into vs, shall the Lord make forcible to destroy the workmanship of Satan into vs, I meane that whole bastard Generation of sinfull afflictions, which Satan hath begotten vpon our mutable nature, by a most vnhappy and vnlawfull copulation: The experience of all the Sainctes of God will prooue this, that Satan by his restless temptations, doth destroy him selfe; which is most euident both in his temptations for sinne, which tend to desperation, as also in his temptations to sinne which tend to presumption. Euery accusation of the Conscience for by-past finnes, is a Preseruatiue to the Childe of God, to keepe him from sinne in time to come; hee reasoning with himselfe after this maner. How Satans temptations for sinne, doth good to the Christian,
If my Enemy doth to disquiet my minde with inward terrours, for these finnes which foolishly I did by his inticement, why shall I harken to him any more hereafter, and so increase the matter of my trouble; for what fruite haue I of all the finnes wherein I tooke pleasure, but terrour and shame? And shall I looke that this forbidden Tree, shall render any better fruite hereafter? O what a faythlesse traytor is Satan, hee inticeth man vnto sinne; and when he hath done it, he is the first accuser and troubler of man for sinne. Shall I heare and trust the enemy of my soule, that hath deceiued mee so often?
When hee workes in vs, he is a temptor: *Rom. 6. 21.*
when we haue finished his worke, (which is sinne) hee is an accuser of vs to the iudge; and when he returneth, he returneth as a troubler and a tormentor of vs for our finnes. Stoppe thy eare therefore, O my soule,

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soule from the voyce of this deceitfull enchaunter. His temptations againe vnto sinne are so many promouations, spurring vs forward to the throne of grace: for whilest we finde his restless malice pursuing that sparckle of spirituall life, whereby the Lord hath quikened vs; and our owne weaknesse and inhabilitie to resist him; then we are forced with

2. Chr. 20. 12 *Israel in Egypt, to sigh for the thraldome; and to cry with Ioseph, O Lord our God, we wott not what to doe! but our eyes are turned toward thee.* And who feesles not this? that the grace of seruient Prayer, wherein otherwise we faint, (our handes being more readie to fall downe then the handes of *Moses*, except they be supported) is greatly wakened, and intended in the Children of God, by the buffets of Satan: So they

2. Cor. 12. 7. wakened the holy Apostle, and stirred him vp to such seruencie in prayer, that he besought the Lord thrise, that is, many times, to deliuer him from them: Yea (which is more) the Lord made them effectuell meanes to beate downe the power of naturall pride in him, least hee should haue been exalted out of measure, through the greatnes of his reuelations. A wonderfull worke, that the Father of Pride, becommeth against his will, a represser of Pride: and hee who first procured this Poyson in the nature of Man, is made (contrary to his intent) an instrument to suppress it. Thus the Lord our God out-shooteth Satan in his owne Bowe: and with the Sword of *Goliath*, cutteth off his owne head: His holy name be prayled therefore for euer.

How afflictions are profitable to a Christian.

Now as concerning outward afflictions, it is true, that as the *Philistines* could not vnderstande *Samsons* Ridole, how Sweete came out of the sower, and meate out of the eater: So can no Worldlings vnderstand, that Tribulation bringeth out Patience: and that our light & momentarie afflictions, causeth vnto vs a farre more excellent

Judg. 14. 14.

R. m. 5. 3.

2. Cor. 4. 17.

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lent and eternall waight of glorie : but the children of
God hath learned by experience, that albeit no visi-
tation be sweete for the present, yet afterwarde it
bringeth the quiet fruite of righteousness vnto them,
who are thereby exercised : and that there is more
solide ioy in *Suffring rebuke with Christ, then in all the* *2. Cor. 4. 17.*
pleasures of Sinne, which indure but for a season. For as
Moses, the mediator of the old Testament, by his
prayer, made the bitter Waters of Marah sweete, that
the Israelites might drinke of it ; so Iesus the media-
tor of the new Testament, by his Passion, hath mit-
igated to his children, the bitternes of the Crosse ;
and not onely mixed it with ioy, but made it most
profitable. The forlorne Sonne concluded, neuer
to returne home to his Father, till he was brought
low by affliction. And many in the Gospell, were
forced by Diseases corporall, to run to Iesus, where
others enioying bodily health, did nothing but dis-
daine him. The earth which is not tilled and broken,
beares nothing but Thornes and Briars : the Vines
waxe wilde by time, except they be proyned and
cut : so should our vaine heartes ouergrow with
wilde affections, if the Lord by sanctified trouble, did
not continually manure them. Therefore (sayd Iere-
mie) *It is good for a man to beare the yoke in his youth.* *Lam. 3. 27.*
And David confessed, *It was good for him, that hee was*
afflicted. Yea (sayth our Sauour) *Every branch that* *Psal. 119.*
beares fruite, my heauenly Father purgeth it, that it may
bring forth more fruite. No worke can be made of
Gold and Siluer, without Fire : and Stones are not
meete for Pallace worke, except they be pollihed
and squared by hamering : no more is it possible, that
we can be vessels of Honour in the houies of our
God, except first we be fined & melted in the fire of
affliction : neither can we be as liuing Stones, to be
placed in the Wall of the heauenly *Jerusalem,* except

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Psal. 55.

Jer. 48. 11.

Psal. 89.

How Death
also workes
for the best to
the Christian.

Death com-
pared to the
red sea, wherein
the Egyptians
were drow-
ned, and the
Israelites went
through to
Canaan.
Rom. 8.

so long as we are heere, the hand of God beat from vs our proud lumps, by the hammer of Affliction. As standing Waters putrefies and rottes, so the wicked feares not God (sayth the *Psalmist*), because they haue no changes. And *Moab* keeps his sent, (sayth the Prophet) because he was not powred from vessell to vessell, but hath been at rest euer since his youth. And therefore, O Lord! rather then we should keepe the old sent of our naturall corruption, and lue in a carelesse securitie, without the feare of thy holy name, and so become fitfalls in our sinnes; no rather, O Lord! change thou vs from estate to estate; waken vs with the presence of thy hand; purge vs, O Lord! with thy fire, and chastice vs with thy rodde; alway Lord, with a protestation, that thou stand to thy promise made to the Sonnes of *Dauid*, *I will visit them with my rodde, if they sinne against mee: but my mercie will I neuer take from them.* So be it Lord, euen: So be it.

The same comfort haue we also against Death; that now in Christ Iesus, it is not a punishment of our sinnes, but a full accomplishment of the mortification of sinne, both in soule and body; for by it, all the conduites of sinne are stopped, the weapons of vnrighteousnesse broken: and though our bodies seeme to be consumed, yet are they but sowne like graines of Wheate, into the fielde and husbandrie of the Lord, which must die, before they be quickned; but in the day of haruest, shall spring vp againe most glorious, and shalbe restored by the same holy Spirit who now dwelles in them: and as to our soules they are relieued out of this house of seruitude, and that they may depart and returne to him from whom they came; therefore haue I compared Death to the Redde Sea, wherein *Pharaoh* and his *Egyptians* were drowned, and sanke like a Stone to the

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the bottome, but the *Israelites* of God, went through to their promised *Canaan*: So shall Death be vnto you, O miserable Infidels! whose eyes, the God of this world hath blinded, that no more then the blind *Egyptians*, can you see the light of God, that shineth in *G. shan*, that is, his Church; although yee be in it: to you I say, your Death shalbe a Sea of Gods vengeance, wherein yee shalbe drowned, and shall sinke with your sinnes, heauier then a Millstone about the necke of your soule, to presse you downe to the lowest Helles. But as to you, that are the *Israelites* of God, yee shall walke through the valley of Death, and not need to be afrayde, because the Lord is with you; *His Staffe and his Rodde shall comfort you: Psal. 23.*

Albeit the terrours of Hell, the horrour of the Graue, the guiltinesse of Sinne, stand about thee like Mountaines, threatning to ouerwhelme thee; yet shalt thou go safe through, to the land of thine inheritance; where, with *Moses* and *Meriam*, and all the children of God, euen the congregation of the first borne: *Thou shalt sing prayes ioyfully to the God of thy saluation. Exod. 15. 11.* And thus wee see, how that not onely our present Afflictions, but Satan, Sinne, and Death, are made, *to worke for the best, to them that loue the Lord.*

Now in the last roome concerning the imaginations of men against vs, we shall haue cause to say of them in the end, as *Ioseph* sayd to his brethren, *You did in vnto mee for euill, but the Lord turned it vnto good.* The whole Historie of Gods Booke, is as a cloude of manifold witnessles concurring altogether to confirme this trueth: I content my telle therefore for all, to bring one. When *Dauid* was going forward in the Battaille against *Israel* with *Achish* King of *Gath*, (vnder whom he sojourned for a while, in the time of his banishment) the remanent Princes of the *Philistines*, commaunded him to goe backe; and this

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they did for the worse to disgrace him, because they distrusted him: but the Lord turned it to him *for the best*: Consider *Dauids* estate now, and yee shall see him set betwixt two great extremities. If he had gone backe of his owne accord, the *Philistines* might haue blamed him, and handled him as an enemy: if hee had come forward, hee should haue been guiltie of the blood of *Israel*, and especially of *Saul* the Lordes annoyted; who was slaine in that Battaille.

In this strait, the wit of man can finde him no outgate, but the prouident mercie of God deliuers him in such sort, that no occasion of offence is giuen to *Saul* & his people, because *Dauid* came not against them: neither yet could the *Philistines* condemne him, because he went backe by their commaunde. So notable a benefite did *Dauid* receiue euen by that same deed, wherein his enemies thought they had done him notable a shame: and it should learne vs in our straightest extremities whereunto men can driue vs, to depende on the Lord; and euer then to hope for an outgate, when we see none. For such is thy prouidence, O Lord, whereby in mercy thou watchest ouer those that loue thee, that these euilles that are intended against them, by thee, are turned into good to them.

If this comfort
belong to eue-
rie member,
much more to
the whole bo-
dy and state
of the Church

And heere we haue further to consider, that seeing this is the priuledge of euery one that loues the Lord; much more must it appertaine to the whole Church of God. It is the portion of *Abraham*, albeit the Father of the Faythfull, yet one of Gods Children. *I will blesse them that blesse thee, and curse them that curse thee*: And shall it not belong (thinke wee) to all the congregation of the first borne? Will not the Lord be a Wall of fire rounde about *Ierusalem*,
and

Zach. 2.5.

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and the glory in the midst of her? Will hee not keepe her as the apple of his eye? Shall not Ierusalem be as a Cuppe of Poyson vnto all her enemies, and a heauie Stone? *Zach. 12.2.* Yea surely all that lift it vp shall be torne, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it; the weapons made against her shall not prosper; and euery tongne that shall rise against her in iudgement, shall be condemned. This is the heritage of the Lordes seruantes, and the portion of them who loue him. For the Church is that Arke of God, which may mount vp higher as the Waters *Gen. 7.18.* increaseth; but can not be ouerwhelmed: the Bush which may burne, but can not be consumed; *Exod. 3.2.* the House built on a Rocke, which may be beaten with wind and raine, but cannot be ouerthrowen. *Math. 7.15.*

The Lord who changeth times and seasons; who takes away Kinges, and setteth vp Kinges: hath re-
 prooued Kinges for his Churches sake: and hee gouerneth all the Kingdomes of the earth in such sort, that their rynges and fallinges, their changes and mutations, are all dispensed for the good of his Church: for there is but one of two sentences, wherein all the Iudges of the world may iudge of themselves, and see clearly their end. Either that, which *Mordecai* sayd: *Ester*, Who knowes if for this thou art come to the Kingdome, that by thee deliuerance might come to Gods people? Or else that which *Moses* in Gods name sayd to *Pharaoh*, (the first oppressor of Gods Church in his adulescencie) I haue set thee vp to declare my power, because thou exaltest thy selfe against my people.

Enemies of
 Gods Church,
 looke to their
 end,

Ester. 4.14.

Deut. 2.21.

How miserable then are they, who when they are highest, abuseth their power, to hold the people of God lowest?

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Haue they not cause to feare, least the Lord haue set them vp against him, as an Obiect of his Power and lustice? If we will marke the course of the Lords proceeding euer since the beginning of the world, wee shall finde, that as he orders the state of earthly Power, for the accomplishment of his will concerning his Church; so euermore a blessing followes them, who are instruments of her good: and by the contrary, an inuitable cusse followes them, who are the instruments of her euil.

When the Lord concluded to bring his Church from *Canaan*, to sojorne in *Egypt*, hee sent such a Famine in *Canaan*, as compelled them to forsake it: but made plenty in *Egypt*, by the hand of *Ioseph*; whom the Lord sent before as a prouisor to his Church; and by whom *Pharaoh* was made so fauourable to *Iacob*, that he was allowed to dwell in *Goshen*; but when such time came, that he would translate his Church from *Egypt* to *Canaan*, then hee altered *Pharaohs* countenance; hee raysed vp a new King, which knew not *Ioseph*, and turned the *Egyptians* heartes away from *Israel*, so that they vexed *Israel*, and caused them to serue by crueltie: and all this the Lord did, to the end his people should become wearie of *Egypt*, and inforced by violence to make forward to *Canaan*, whereas otherwayes (as it well appeares) if they had been danted as in the beginning, they would haue neglected the promised Land, and contented themselves with *Onions and Fleshsports* of *Egypt*. Thus *Pharaoh* by his obstinacie brings on him selfe, his iust deterued punishment; and the Lord workes to his people their vndererued deliuerance: and afterward, when the finnes of his people drew to that ripenesse, that they had caused their dayes to draw neare, & were come to their tearme, the Lord sturred vp the King of *Babel*, as the Rod of his wrath, and

Ezech. 22. 4
Isa. 10. 5.

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and Staffe of his indignation, he sent him to the dissembling Nation, and gaue him a charge against the people of his wrath, to take the spoyle and the prey, and to tread the vnder feete like myre in the streets: and then that the Lord might be auenged of the finnes of *Israel*, he subdued all Kingdomes round about them vnder the King of *Babel*, that no stoppe or impediment should be in their way to hold off the iudgement from them: But yet againe, when the Lord had accomplished all his workes vpon *Mount*

Sion, and the appoynted time of mercie was come, and the 70. yeares of Captiuitie was expired, then the Lord visited the proude heart of the King of *Assur*; and for his Churches sake, he altered againe the gouernment of the whole earth, translating the Empire to the *Medes* and *Persians*, that *Cyrus* the Lords annoynted, might performe to his people the promised deliuerance. All which, should learne vs

The gouernment of the whole earth altered for the Churches sake.

in the greatest changes and alterations which can fall out in the world, to rest assured, that the Lord will worke for the good of his Church, though the earth should be mooued, and the mountaines fall into the middelt of the Sea; yea though the waters thereof rage and be troubled, yet there is a Riuer whose steames shall make glad the Cittie of our good God, in the midlt of it, and therefore it shall not be mooued: yea they who should be as nursing fathers & mothers vnto the Church of God, may forsak her, & become her enemies: but assuredly they shall perish; and comfort & deliuerance shall appeare vnto Gods people out of an other place. The Lord for a while may put the bridle of bondage in the *Philistines* handes to humble *Israel* for their finnes, but it shall be taken from them: and the day shall come, wherein we shall with ioy draw Water out of the Welles of saluation, and prayse the Lord, saying: *Though*

Psal. 42.

Esa. 12. 1.

thou

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thou wast angry with mee, thy wrath is turned away, and thou comfortest mee. Yea, Sion shall cry out, and shewre for ioy, for great is the Holy one of Israel in the midst of her: and therefore in our lowest humiliations, let vs answer our aduersaries. Reioyce not against me, Oh mine enemy, though I fall, I shall rise: and when I shall sit in darknesse; the Lord is a light vnto mee: I will beare the wrath of the Lord; because I haue sinned against him, vntill hee plead my cause, and execute indgement for mee, he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall see his righteousnesse: then he that is mine enemy, shall looke vpon it, and shame shall couer him who sayd to mee, What is the Lord thy God? Now shall he be trodden vnder, as the myre in the streete: yea, so let all thine enemies perish, O Lord!

Mich. 7. 8.

What is a
Christians
best.

For the best. This best, is no other thing, but that precious saluation prepared to be shoven vs in the last time, reserued in the heauens for vs, and wherevnto we are reserued, by the power of God through Fayth; whereof we learne that our best estate is not yet wrought so as it is accomplished; it is only in the working, sayes the Apostle: and therefore we are not to looke for it in this life.

1. Pet. 1. 5.

The wicked
man is at his
best, when he
comes first in-
to the world.

There is a great difference betweene the godly and the wicked: the one enioyes their best in this life: the other, lookes for it, and are walking toward it; For if it should be demanded, when a wicked man is at his best? I would answer, his best is euil inough; but then a wicked man is at the best, when he comes first into the world; for then his sinnes are fewest, his iudgement easiest. It had bin therefore good for him, that the knees had not prevented him, but that he had dyed in the birth: for as a Riuer which is smallest at the beginning, increaseth as it proceedes by the accession of other Waters into it, till at length it be swallowed

Iob. 3. 11.

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vp into the deepe; so the wicked, the longer he liueth,
Waxeth euer worse and worse; deceiuing, and being de- *2.Tim.3.13.*
ceined (sayth the Apostle.) Proceeding from euill to
worse (sayth Ieremy,) till at length he be swallowed *Ier.9.3.*
vp in that Lake that burneth with Fire and Brimstone. *Reu.19.20.*
And this the Apostle expresseth most significantly,
when he compares the wicked man vnto one gather-
ing a treasure, wherein he heapes vp wrath to him-
selfe, against the day of wrath: For euen as the
Worldling, who euery day casteth in a peece of mo-
ney in his treasure, in few yeares multiplies such a *Rom.2,*
summe, the particulars whereof hee him selfe is not
able to keepe in minde; but when he breakes vp his
Boxe, then he findes in it sundry sortes of Coyne,
whereof he had no remembrance: Euen so is it, and
worse, with thee, O impenitent man, who not onely *A warning
for impeni-
tent sinners.*
euery day, but euery hower and moment of the day,
doest multiply thy transgressions, and defile thy
Conscience, hoording vp into it some dead worke or
other: to what a reckoning thinkest thou, shall
thy finnes amount in the end, though thou forget
them as thou committest them? Yet the Apostle
tellethe thee, that thou hast laid them vp in a treasure,
and not onely so, but with euery sinne, thou hast
gathered a portion of wrath proportionable to thy
sinne, which thou shalt perfectly know in that day
wherein the Lord shall breake vp thy treasure, and
open the booke of thy Conscience, and set thy finnes
in order before thee: then shall *Psal.50.18.*
Thine owne wickednesse
correct thee, and thy turninge backe, shall reprove thee:
Ier.2.19.
then shalt thou know and behold, that it is an euill thing
and a bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God:
And shalt be astonished to see such a multitude of
witnesses standing vp against thee; then shalt thou
perceiue that these finnes which thou hast cast be-
hind thy backe, the Lord hath set them in the light of *Psal.90.8.*
his

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his countenance: and then woe shall be vnto thee, for the Lord shall turne thine owne wayes vpon thy head, when thou hast accomplished the measure of thine iniquitie: the Lord shall giue thee to drinke of the cuppe which thou hast filled with thine owne hand, and shall double his stripes vpon thee, according to the multitude of thy transgressions.

The Christian
is not at his
best now: it
is in the
working
only.
Ioh. 7. 6.

But as to the Children of God, if you will aske, When they are at their best? I answer. Prayed be God, our worst is away, our good is begun: our best is at hand: as our Sauour sayd to his Kinsmen, to may we say to the Worldlings: Your *Time is alway*, but, *my time is not yet come*. Wee were at the worst immediatly before our conuersion; for our whole life till then, was a walking with the children of disobedience in the brode way that leades to damnation: and then were wee at the worst, when we had proceeded furthest in the way of vnrighteousnesse, for then were we furthest from God. Our best began in the day of our recalling, wherein the Lord by his Word and holy Spirit, called vpon vs, and made vs turne our backs vpon Satan, and our face toward the Lord, and so caused vs part companie with the children of disobedience; among whom, we had our conuersation before: then we came home with the penitent forlorne, to our fathers family; but they went forward in their sinnes to iudgement: That was a day of diuision betwixt vs and our sinnes: In that day (with *Israel*) we entred into the borders of *Canaan* into *Gilgall*, & there were we circumcised, and the shame of *Egypt* was taken fro vs, euen our sinne, which is our shame indeed, & which we haue borne from our mothers wombe: the Lord graunt that we may keepe it for euer in thankfull remembrance: and that we may count it a double shame to returne againe to the bondage of *Egypt*, to serue the prince
of

Ios. 5. 9.

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of Darknesse in Bricke and Clay; that is, to haue fellowship any more with the vnfruitfull workes of darknesse, but that like the redeemed of the Lord, wee may *Waik from strength to strength, till we appeare* *Psal. 84. 7.* *before the face of our God in Sion.*

Alwayes this difference of estates of the godly and wicked, should learne vs patience: Let vs not seeke that in the Earth, which our gracious God in his most holy dispensation hath reserved for vs in the Heauen; Let vs not be like the foolish *Iewes*, who loued the place of their Banishment in *Babel*, better then their home: For heere we are not at our best, now our life is *hid with the Lord*, and wee know

This difference of the godly & wicked concerning their best, should learne vs comfort and patience.

not yet what we shall be: but we know when he shall appeare, we shall be like him: the Lord shall carry us by his mercie, and bring us in his strength to his holy habitation:

1. Ioh. 3.

Exod. 15. 13.

Hee shall plant vs in the mountaine of his inheritance, euen the place which he hath prepared; and sanctuarie which he hath established: then, *Euerlasting ioy* shalbe upon our heades, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away from vs for euer. And now till the Lord hath accomplished his worke into vs, let vs not faint, because *the wicked flesh*: neither thinke we haue cleansed our handes in vaine, because they prosper, they are to be pittied rather then enuied: let them eate and drinke, and be merry; sure it is, they will neuer see a blyther day then that which they see presently: they haue enioyed their Heauen in the Earth: they haue receiued their consolation in this life, and hath gotten their portion in this world. Oh

Esa. 35. 10.

Psal. 39.

what tongue can expresse their miserie! And yet as *Samuel* mourned for *Saul* when God reiected him:

Luk. 19.

and *Jeremy* wept in secret for the pride of his people, that would not repent of their sinnes: How can we but take vp a bitter lamentation for many of you, whom in this time of Grace, wee see to be strangers

How miserable are the wicked, who haue their heauen in the

earth.

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Gen. 19.

from Grace? We wish from our hearts, yee were not like the Kinsmen of *Lot*, who thought he was scorning, when hee tolde them of a *Iudgement to come*; and therefore for no request would goe with him out of *Sodom*, but rarryed while the fire of the Lords indignation consumed them, But rather as *Sara* followed *Abraham* from *Chaldee* to *Canan*, so you would take vs by the hand, and goe forward with vs, from the *Helles* to the *Heauens*. But alas, *the lustes of the flesh*, holdes you captiue, your *Sinnes* hath blinded you, and the *Loue of the world* doth bewitch you; but all of them in th'end, shall deceiue you: For *All*

Eccle. 3. 17.

the labour vnder the Sunne, is but vanitie and vexation of Spirit. When you haue finished your taske, you shalbe lesse content then yee were at the beginning: you shalbe as one wakened out of a dreame, who in his sleepe thought he was a possessor of many things, but when he awaketh, behold, he hath nothing. Like that Rich man, who sayd in his securitie, *Now my soule, thou hast mickle good for many dayes*: and euen vpon the next day, redacted to so great pouertie with him that despised *Lazarus*, that he had not so much as a drop of cold Water to coole his tongue with: then shall you lament, Wee haue wearied our selues in the way of iniquitie, and it did not profite vs. Alasse, how shall I learne you to be wise? The Lord when he created man, set him in a roome aboue all his creatures; and now degenerate man, sets euery Creature in his heart aboue the Lord. O fearefull ingratitude. *Do you forswear the Lord, yee foolish people and vnwise?* There is nothing which you conceiue to be good; but when you want it, you are carefull to seeke it: when you haue it, you are carefull to keepe it; onely you are carelesse of the Lord Iesus, though hee be that incomparable Iewell, that brings light in darkesse, life in death, comfort in trouble, mercie against

Deut. 32. 6.

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gainst al Iudgement; you should set him as a Signet on your heart, as an Ornament on your head; & put him on as that glorious attire that gets you place to stand before God. But what paines do you take to seeke him? what assurance haue you, that yee are in him? or what mourning doe you make, because yee are strangers from him? Can yee say that the tenth of your thoughts & words, are imployed vpon him? Alas, how long will you wander after vanities, and followe lyes? Will yee for euer forsake the Fountaine of lyuing Waters, and digg to your selues broken Pittes that can holde no Water? *O consider this Psal. 50. 22, (in time) yee that forget the Lord, least he teare you in peeces, and there be none to deliuer you.*

The last lesson wee obserue in this part of the *All things* verse, is this: as *All things workes for the best, to them* worke to the *that loue the Lord;* so all things workes for the worst *worst, to the* to the wicked: there is nothing so cleane, which *wicked.* they defile not: nothing so excellent, which they abuse not. Make *Saul* a King, & *Balaam* a Prophet, and *Iudas* an Apostle, their preferment shalbe their destruction. If they be in prosperitie, they contemne God, and their prosperitie becomes their ruine: If they be in aduersitie, they blaspheme him; and like raging waues of the Sea, cast out their owne dirt to their shame. Yea, what speake I of these things, *even their table shalbe a snare to them: Iesus Christ is a* *Psal. 69. 22.* *rocke of offence to them, the Gospel the sauour of death to* *2. Cor. 5.* *them, and their prayer is turned into sinne to them:* And what more excellent things then these, as a soule stomacke turneth most healthsome food into corruption, so their polluted Conscience, turne Iudgement into Gall; & the fruite of Righteousnesse, into Wormewood: And all this should prouoke vs to become good in our persons, or else there is nothing, were it neuer so good, can be profitable vnto vs.

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The second part of the verse, is the persons to whom the former comfort be- longeth.

To them that loue God. Heere followes the second part of the verse, conteyning a description of the persons to whom this priuledge appertaineth, together with a reason of the former comfort : of force *All things must worke for the best*, (that is to saluation) *to them that loue God*, becaute they are called (namely to saluation) *according to Gods purpose*. The strength of this reason, standes in the necessitie and immutabilitie of the *Purpose of God*, more stable then the Decree of the *Medes and Persians* ; for what he hath decreed, can not be reuoked, annulled, nor impeded. It is that supream cause of all, which orders all inferior causes and incidents whatsoeuer, in such sort, that they must worke to the aduancement of that most high purpose of God.

Our calling comes from Gods purpose, and carries vs to the determined glory.

This reason is made clearer in the subsequent verse, where the Apostle lets vs see how the linkes of the golden Cheine of our Saluation are knit together inseparable, by the hand of God, that no power in heauen or earth can sunder them : whereof it comes, that he that is sure of one, is sure of all. And now let vs take a short view of it, for confirming the Apostles reason. *Election* is the first, and it is the most ancient Charter of the right of Gods Children to their fathers inheritaunce. *Calling*, is the second, and it is that gift of God whereby wee are cognosced the Sonnes of God, and our *Election* secret in it selfe, is made manifest to our selues and others. *Iustification* is the third, and it is that Grace of God, whereby we are insest in Iesus Christ in such sort, that wee are made one with him, and partakers of all that is his. *Glorification* is the last, and it is that Grace of God whereby wee shalbe entered in the due time, full heires to our heauenly Father.

No King on the earth can produce so auncient a right to his Crowne, as the Christian, effectually called.

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called. No Man on the earth can be cognosed his Fathers heire vpon such sufficient warrant, as the Christian. For in his *Regeneration*, the Father communicates to him his Image, his Nature, his Spirit, whereby he begins from feeling, to call God his Father; and in life and manners resembleth him. No Free-holder so surely infected in his Landes, hauing so many confirmations of his right, as hath the iustified Christian, who vpon his gite, hath receiued the Earnest, the Pledge, the Seale, and the Witnesse of the great King. And last of all, the Christian shall be entered to the full fruition of his inheritance, with such ioy and triumph in the glorious assemblie of the Saintes, as the like was neuer seene in the world, no not in *Ierusalem* that day when *Salomon* sat downe in his fathers Throne; then their ioy was so great, *1. Kin. 2. 40.* *That the earth rang with the sound of them:* but nothing comparable to this; and herein standes the excellencie of a Christian, and certaintie of his saluation.

For this Cheyne of our Saluation reacheth (as I may say) from eternitie to eternitie: the beginning of it (albeit before beginning) is our election: the end of it (albeit without end) is our glorification: And these two endes of the Cheyne, the Lord keeps them sure and secret in his owne hand: but the two middle linkes of the Cheyne, to wit, *Calling* and *Iustification*, the Lord hath letten them downe from the Heauen to the Earth, that wee should gripe and apprehend them; that being sure of the two inindle Linkes, we might also be sure of the two endes; because the Lord hath knit them inseparably together. Then thou, who wouldst be comforted with the assurance of thy saluation, take heed to this, making it knownen to thine owne Conscience by a holy life, that God hath called thee, and iustified thee: Gripe sure, as it were with the one hand, the Linke of *Cal-*
ling,

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By our disposition in this life, each man hath to consider of his euerlasting weale or woe.

ling, and with the other hand, the linke of Iustification; then mayst thou know assuredly, Election before the world is thine; Glorification after this, shall also be thine. To make this yet more plaine, we are to remember, this mortal life of ours, is a short interiected poynt of Time betwixt two Eternities (if so I may call it :) or like a stepping Stone betwixt two Gulphes, wherevpon some in feare and trembling, worke out their saluation; and so steppes from Gods eternall Election to endlesse glorification. Others againe, in wantonnesse & carelesse securitie, drinke in Iniquitie with greedinesse, and so steppes from the decree of Reprobation, that most iustly they procure their euerlasting condemnation: So that euery man is to consider of his euerlasting weale or woe by his present disposition in this life. Oh that we had sanctified memories, to remember this so long as we are heere. If of weakenesse we fall, we may rise againe: and if we haue not learned well to repent in one day, we haue leaue of the Lordes patience to learne it better another day: his name be praysed therefore, who hath opened a doore of mercie to sinners, and with long suffering, waites for our repentance. But he who in the day of his transmigration steppes the wrong steppe, will neuer get leaue to amende it. Where the tree falles, it shall lie there, the wicked dies in their sinnes, and so steppes downeward to the deepe Pit and Gulph, out of the which there is no redemption. Let vs therefore be well aduised before we leape. Let vs fasten our feete in the borders of that *Canaan* in time, which shall be done, if we make our whole life a proceeding from *Election* to *Glorification*, and that through *Calling* and *Iustification*: which two, is inseparably following them, the *Sanctification* & *Renouation* of the whole man. The Lord make ys wise in time, that we may consider

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consider our course, and thinke of the end where vnto it leades vs : for there is but one of two, as *Moses* protested to the *Israelites*, so do I vnto you : *I haue layde this day life and death before you* : the Lord giue you grace to make choyce of the best.

But, now to returne to the wordes of this description of the persons, to whom this priuiledge appertayneth, wee haue these thinges. First, the *Purpose of God* : Secondly, his Calling according to his *Purpose* : Thirdly, the euident tokens according to Gods calling, which is, *the loue of God*. The *Purpose of God*, concerning thy salutiō, thou mayest know by thy *Calling* : and if againe thou wilt try thy *Calling*, try it by the *Loue of God*, which thou findest in thee. And of these three, now let vs speake shortly.

According to his *Purpose*. Heere you see then how the Apostle draweth our *Calling* from the *Purpose of God* : and so when he will comfort vs with the certaintie of our Saluation, hee leades vs out of our selues, vp to the Rocke that is higher then wee ; hee teacheth vs to cast our Anchor within the Vaile, and to fasten our Soules vpon that vchangeable *Purpose of God*. It is most expedient for the children of God, to marke this, because the manifold changes we find in our selues, do often times interrupt the peace of our mindes, that the Lord our God hath in such sort dispensed our Saluation, that the ground thereof is layd in his owne immutable *Purpose* ; but the markes, tokens, and pledges, he placeth in them, after their *Calling*, for whom it was ordayned. The tokens are changeable, as wee our selues in whom they are, are changeable, but the ground holdes fast, being layde in the vchangeable God, in whom falles no shadow of alteration : and this should comfort vs against our dayly vicissitudes, changes, defectes, and temporall detentions : our Faith may faint, our spirituall

What comfort wee haue in this, that our saluation is grounded on the Lords vchangeable purpose.

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Mal. 3. 6.

Our saluation
is neither in
part nor in the
whole ascribed
to our merites

life may languish, our Hope hooouer, our Heartes in praying fall downe like the inteebled handes of *Moses*; yet let vs not despaire, no change in vs, can alter the Lords vnchangeable *Purpose*: hee who hath begun the worke in vs, will also perfect it. *Because I am not changed* (sayth the Lord) *therefore is it that yee, O sonnes of Iacob, are not consumed.*

This *Purpose of God*, is called otherwayes, *The will of God*, and, *The good pleasure of his will*: and it doth learne vs, to giue to the Lord the prayse which is due to him, namely the prayse of the whole worke of our Saluation, should be ascribed to the good pleasure of *his will* onely, and not to our foreseene Merites: that poyson of pride, which Satan powred in our first Parents, whereby he prouoked them to aspire to be equall with God, doth yet appeare in their posteritie: the corrupt heart of man euer ayming at this, eyther in part or in whole, to haue the prayse of Saluation ascribed to him, and so would start vp in the roome of God, vsurping that glory which belongeth to the Lord, and he will not giue to another: then the which no sacriledge more fearefull can be committed against the Lord. O man! content thee with that which the Lord offers thee, and let that alone which the Lord reserueth to him selfe. *My Peace* (sayth the Lord) *I giue vnto you, but my Glorie I will not giue to an other.* It is enough that the saluation of the Lord is thine; but as to the glorie of Saluation, let it remaine to the Lord: he is for this, called *The Father of Mercie*, because Mercie bredde in his owne bosome: many causes without himselfe, found he without himselfe, moouing him to execute Iustice; but a cause moouing him to shew mercie found he neuer, saue onely, *The good pleasure of his will*. Therefore sayth the Apostle, *The Lord hath called vs with a holy calling, not according to our workes, but ac-*
cording

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sording to his Purpose and Grace. Surely except the Lord had reserued Mercie for vs, we had been like *Sodome and Gomorrah*, but it hath pleased him in his Mercie, of the same lumpe of Clay, to make vs vessels of Honour, whereof he hath made others vessels of dishonour; and who is able sufficiently to thinke of so great a benefite? Therefore let the Redeemed of the Lord, cry out with a louder voyce then *David*, *Psalm. 8.*
O Lord! What are wee, that thou hast been so mindfull of us? Not unto us O Lord! not unto us, but unto thy name, giue the glory: for thy louing kindnesse, and for thy truthes sake; for our saluation commeth of God, that sits vpon the Throne, and of the Lambe: to thee therefore be prayse, and honour, and glorie for euer and euer.

To them that are called. The Purpose of God, which is sufficient in it selfe, is made knowne and manifest to vs by his *Calling*: for our *Calling* is a declaration of the Decree of our *Election*, and as it were the secret Voyce of God, bringing from the Heauens to our Soules, this comfortable message, *That wee are the Sonnes of God.* Now we must know, that Gods *Calling* is twofold: one outward, which is common also to the wicked, and of it speakes our Saviour, *Many are called, but few are chosen*: The other inwarde and effectually, proper onely to the Godly, whom the Lord is purposed to saue. And this will learne vs to consider of three sortes of men in the world, whereof some not called at all; some called, but not chosen; some chosen, and therefore called to be sanctified, iustified, and glorified. Yee that will take a right view of all mankind, shall find them as it were standing in three Circles; they onely being happy who are within the third. In the ourmost Circle are all those on whom the Lord hath not vouchsafed so much as an outward calling; and heere standes the

Two callings:
outward, and
inward.

All the world
standes in 3.
Circles, & that
none are happy,
except they
who are within
the third.

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greatest part of the world. In the middlemost Circle, which is much narrower, are all those which are partakers of Gods outward calling by the Word & Sacraments. And in the third Circle, which is of smallest compasse (in regard of the rest) stands those, who beside the outward calling of God by his Word, are called also inwardly and effectually by his Holy Spirit. These are Christes little Flocke, the few chosen, the communion of Saints, the Lords *third part*, so to speake with *Zacharie*; the two partes shall be cut off and die, *but the third will the Lord fine as Silver and Gold*: of them will the Lord say, *This is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God*. It is a great step in deed, that wee are brought from the vitermost Circle vnto the second; but it is not sufficient to saluation: yea rather they who stand in the second Circle, hearing the voyce of God call them to repentance, and yet harden their heartes, and will not follow the Lord, may looke for a more fearefull condemnation, then they who are in the vitermost rancke of all. Waightie are those warninges of our Sauour: *Sodome* and *Gomorah* shall be in an easier estate in the day of Iudgement; then they to whom the Lord hath spoken by his word, but they would not receiue it: and that double stripes are for him that knowes his Maisters will, and doth it not. Content not your selfe therefore with this; that yee are brought within the compasse of this visible Church, and made partakers of an outward Calling; that yee haue been Baptized in the name of Iesus, and communicated at his holy Table: for not euery one that sayes *Lord, Lord, shall enter in his Kingdome*; except yee find also the Lords inward and effectuall Calling, that the arme of his Grace hath drawn you within the compasse of this third Circle, and so brought you to be of his owne third part, and set
you

Zach, 13. 9.

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you downe among the generation of them that seekes the face of God, and therefore forsakes their sinnes, that they may find him.

Then we see this excellent Priviledge is restrai- Of the inward
ned to them who are called inwardly; and therefore calling.
let vs yet a litle consider it. This inward Calling, is
the communication of Christs sauing Grace, whereby
the minde is inlightened, the heart purified by Faith,
the affections sanctified, and the whole man reform-
ed: For as the Lord by his Gospell, offers to his
Children Righteousnesse and Life, so by his holy
Spirit he giues them that iustifying Fayth, and ope-
neth their heart to receiue that Grace which is pre-
ached and proclaymed to them in the Gospell. So
then, this worke of our Calling, is altogether the
Lords: It is his prayse that he calles things which *2. Cor. 4.*
are not, and makes them to be. The Lord that com-
manded light to shine out of darknesse, hath giuen to
our minds the light of the knowledge of his glorie in
the face of Christ Iesus: he it is that creates in vs a *Psal. 51.*
new heart, and putteth a new spirit into our bowels,
that we may walke in his Statutes. The Lord promi-
sed that he would call many of the *Gentiles* to the spi- *Ezech. 11. 19*
rituall *Ierusalem*, to suck out the milke of the breastes
of her consolation, & be delighted with the bright-
nesse of her glory: shal I cause others to be fruitfull, *Esa. 66.*
saith the Lord, & remaine barrē my selfe? and this his
gracious promise hath he most abundantly perfor-
med in our dayes: his name be praysed therefore.

As this worke is onely the Lorders, so he restraines
it onely to them who are his owne. The outward
Calling is extended to all: but the inward Calling
makes a particular separation of a fewe from the re-
manent: where it is wonderfull to see the distinction
which is made betwixt man & man in all ranckes &
estates, by this effectuall Calling of two Brethren,

This inward
calling is the
arme of God,
choosing out
in the world
his owne elect

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as *Jacob* and *Eſau* : of two Prophets, as *Moses* and *Balaam* : of two Kinges, as *Dauid* and *Saul* : of two Apostles, as *Peter* and *Iudas* : of two Theeues, th'one is taken, th'other reiecteſt : and thus the Arme of the Grace of God, goes through to euery corner of the earth, according to his pleasure, culling out by his Word, from among the remnant of the world, those who belong to this *Election*. This Grace of God, it enters in a Land, and not into euery Cittie: it enters into a Cittie, but not into euery Familie: yea, and it will enter in a Familie, and yet not come to euery person of the Familie, of husband and wife, of maisters and seruants, of parents and children, of brethren and sisters; often times the one is taken, the other is left: It came to *Jericho*, and weyled out *Zacheus*: It came to *Philippi*, and weyled out *Lidia* and the *Taylor*: It came to *Nero* his Court, and not to him selfe: It entered into the Familie of *Narcissus*, and yet past by *Narcissus* himselfe: It is the worke of God, and marueilous in our eyes. The Gospell is preached to many, but the Blessing brought by the Gospell, lights onely vpon the Children of Grace. And hereof ariseth this. dayly distinction which we see betweene man and man; all heare alike, but all haue not Faith; all are not edified alike: Some forsake their sinnes, and followes the Lord: others forsaking the Lord, walkes on in their sinnes. As the Lord gouerneth the raine, and makes it fall vpon one Cittie and not vpon another; so hee dispenſeth the deaw of his Grace, that he makes it drop downe vpon one heart, and not on another. And of this I

How the heart would wish, that so many of you as yet are strangers from Grace, should learne to know your miserable state: What a fearefull thing is this, that God hath conuerted so many in the Cittie wherein thou dwellest, yea perhaps many in the Familie wherein thou remainest.

Whereof it comes, that the Gospell where it is preached, makes a great difference betwixt man and man.

How the heart whereon grace descends, not now in this time of grace, is accus'd.

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remaynest, and yet his Grace neuer lighted vpon thee, but thou art left in thy old sinnes: Consider it rightly, I pray you. If the Lord should do to you as he did to *Israel* in the dayes of *Ahab*, causing it to raine for three yeares and a halfe on all the Landes about you, but not vpon your Land, would you not conceiue in it a sensible curse of God vpon you? O Hypocrite, thou that canst discerne the face of the Skie, and take vp the tokens of Gods anger in the creature, canst thou not discerne the state of thine owne soule, nor apprehend this for a sensible curse, that 30. or 40. yeares the showers of sauing and renewing Grace, hath descended vpon many people round about thee; but neuer vpon thy selfe? thou possessest thy old sinnes, and keepest still a hard, a barren, & a fruitlesse heart. What shall I say to thee? to cut thee off from all hope of Mercy, and so send thee to despaire; I haue not that in commission: the Lord hath his owne time of Calling, and can when he will, of *Saul* a persecutor, make *Paul* a Preacher. But one thing I can certifie thee of, So long as thou art in that state, mourne if thou wilt, thou hast much cause of mourning; for if this effectuall Calling by Grace, go by thee in time to come, as it hath done in time bygan, it is an euident declaration, that thou art a man reserued to wrath, and not ordayned to mercie.

Now that this *Calling* flowing from *Election*, may be yet made fore to our consciences for our greater comfort, let vs marke the maner of the Lordes proceeding into it, and so gather vp some tokens whereby we may discerne it. As in the first Creation, the Lord began at the light; so in the second Creation, he begins at the illumination of the minde: For we can neither know the Lord to feare and loue him, neither yet our selues and our sinnes aright, till the

In the inward calling, the Lord begins at the illumination of the minde,

Lord

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He worketh
motions of
sorrow and
contrition in
the heart.
Iob. 42. 6.

Act. 24. 25.

He worketh a
respondence
and answering
of the heart to
his calling, &
a following of
the Lord.

Lord who commaunded light to shine out of darknesse, shine also into our hearts, to giue vs the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Iesus Christ: and this light of God discouers to vs so many workes of darknesse, wherewith in ignorance we defiled our consciences, that we begin to be ashamed of our selues in the sight of God: yea our very flesh trembleth for feare of his Iudgements, and we cry out with *Iob*: *Now my eye hath seene the Lord, therefore I abhorre my selfe*. And thus the Lord proceedes from the minde to the heart, working into it such a contrition and godly sorrow, as causeth repentance vnto saluation, whereby the heart that was senselesse before, being dead in sinne and trespasses, begins now to stirre and moue; as the heart of *Iosiah* melted at the reading of the Law: and the hearts of those penitent *Iewes* which were pricked at the sharpe Sermon of *Peter*: then feeling our selues vnder death through sinne, we begin to bethinke vs of the way of life, and to aske (with the *taylor*) *What shall we do, that we may be saved?* These motions, meltings, and prickings of the heart, wrought in the elect, by the hearing of Gods word, are the very pluckes of the hand of God, translating thee out of *Nature* into *Grace*: yet must we not rest heere, for *Felix* may tremble while *Paul* is preaching: and many for a while, may receaue this word with ioy, and yet afterward fall a way in the time of temptation. We must therefore consider, if there be in the heart a respondence and answering vnto the Lord: So oft as he calleth, doe we present our selues before him, ready to follow him, saying with *Abraham*, *Heere I am Lord*: and with *Samuel* (after he knew the Lords voyce) *Speake on Lord, thy seruant heareth thee*. This answering and following of the Lord, are vndoubted tokens of effectuall Calling. So oft as the Lord

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Lord calleth, the Christian answereth: When thou saydlt, *Seeke yee my face*: my heart answered, *O Lord!* *Psalm 27.*
I will seeke thy face. If the Lord commaund, the Christian answereth, *O Lord! quicken mee according to thy* *Psalm 119. 18.*
louing kindnesse, that I may apply my heart to keepe thy
Statutes alwayes to the end. If the Lord promise Mer- *Psalm 119. 39.*
 cie, the Christian answers, *Stablish O Lord! thy promise*
to thy seruant, and let it be to mee according to thy word,
for I beleue in thee; but Lord, helpe my vnbeleife. And
 thus in the heart of one effectually called, there is a
 continuall respondance to the voyce of God, a way-
 ting on the Lord, a walking with him, and a follo-
 wing of him where euer he goe. If the Lord haue
 called thee, sure it is thou wilt follow him; and no
 power of the Diuell, of the World, or the Flesh, shall
 hold thee backe from him. When *Ehah* touched
Elisha with his Cloake, he left his Oxen, and came
 after him. When *Iesus* called on *Andrew* and *Peter*,
 they left their Nets, their Ship, and their Father, and
 followed him: When he called on *Matthew*, he
 left all his gainefull trade of the receit of Custome,
 and followed him: When he called on *Mary Maga-*
dalen, she forsooke her sinfull life, and followed him.
 Heere is the finest touchstone to try an inward cal-
 ling. If the Lord hath called thee, thou wilt follow
 him: but if yet thou be wandring after vanity, walk-
 ing on in the course of thy sinne, turning thy backe,
 and not thy face vnto the Lord; decaue not thy
 selfe, partaker of this heavenly Calling, (wherein
 standes the onely comfort of a Christian) hast thou
 neuer been.

That loue God. And last of all, to returne to the
 wordes againe, the whole effectes of our *Inward Cal-*
ling, the Apostle compriseth vnder one, to wit, *The*
loue of God; and that most properly, for *Loue* com-
 priseth al the rest vnder it. *Loue* is the cognoscence of

The loue of
 God is a sure
 token of an in-
 ward calling,
 & of the com-
 mendation of
 Loue.

F.

Christe

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Christs Disciples, sayes our Sauour. It is the *Band of perfection* (sayth the Apostle,) and *accomplishment of the Law*. *Loue*, speaks with the tongue of euery Vertue, *Pittie* biddes thee helpe the Indigent, *Iustice* biddes thee giue euery man his owne, *Mercy* biddes forgiue, *Patience* biddes suffer: but the voyce of *Christian loue*, commaundes all these. *Holy loue* is the eldest Daughter of a *iustifying Fayth*; that is, the first affection that *Fayth* procreateth and sanctifieth, and whereby she workes in the sanctification of the rest. *Loue* is the strongest & most imperious affection in the whole nature of man: all the rest of the affections giues place vnto it, which we may see, euen in the man naturall and vnregenerate: Where *Loue* is kindled, Feare is banished, Couetousnesse coucheth, Ambition is silent. A Coward inflamed with *Loue*, becomes valiant; and a Couetous man is oft times commaunded by *Loue*, to be prodigall: yea, the Proud & Ambitious man, who other wise giues place to no man, for obtaining that which he *loues*, cares not to prostrate his honour to the dust. If *Carnall loue* be so forcible, what shall we say of the *Spiritual loue*? how much more doth it draw the whole powers of soule and body after the Lord: neither is it possible to do otherwayes; for euery thing returns to his owne originall, as the waters go downe to the deepe from whence they came; and Fire tendes vpward to the owne place and region: euen so *holy Loue*, being a sparke of the heauenly Fire, kindled in our hearts by the holy Ghost, doth ramsh vs alwayes vpward towards the Lord, from whom it came, and suffers vs neuer to rest while we enjoy him: then we begin to lue, when we begin to *Loue*. As no Creature can liue out of the owne Element, so the Soule is but dead in sinne, which is destitute of the *loue* of God, No feare to offend him, no care to please

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please him, no obedience to his Commandments can be given by the heart that loues him not. It were longsome to speake of all the properties of *Loue*, we make choyce of a few, as chiefe tryalles of our *Loue*.

The first property of *Loue*, is a burning desire to obaine that which is beloued; as a Woman that loueth her Husband vntaiguedly, can not be content with any *Loue*-token she receiueeth from him in his absence, but longeth more and more till she receiue him selfe: So the Soule which is wounded with the *Loue* of Iesus her immortall Husband, hath a continuall desire to be at him. I graunt euery Token sent from him, brings comfort; but no contentment till she enioyes him: whereof comes these, and such like complaints, *As the Hart brayes for the riuers of water, Psal. 42. 1. so panteth my soule after thee, O my God: O when shall I come and appeare before the presence of my God: my soule desireth after the Lord, as the thirstie land: for, I would be dissolued, and be with the Lord: therefore come, euen so come Lord Iesus. Phil. 1. Rene. 22.* But alas, heere are we taken in our sinnes: Thou sayest thou *Louest* him; but how is it then thou longest not to see him, neither desirest to be with him? yea a small appearance of the day of death, wherein we should goe to him; or mention of the day of Iudgement, wherein he shall come to vs, doth terrifie and affright thee. Thou that contents thee with the gyfts of God, & thinkest not long for him selfe, thou art but like an adulterous woman, who if she possesse the goods of her husband, regards not, albeit she neuer see him selfe. The *Iewes* are blamed, because they called on the Lord rather for oyle & wine, then for him selfe. The *Gentiles* are conuicted for worshipping the creature rather then the creator: but more iustly shal the bastard christiā be condemned for iouing the gyfts of God, more then the giuer. Let vs therefore beware of this searcfull ingratitude.

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We may indeed reioyce in all the gifts the Lord hath giuen vs, & they should thankfully be receiued; but alwayes with a protestatiō, that no thing giuen vnto me heere, be allowed vnto me for my portion, and inheritaunce; and that no contentment euer come to our hearts, till we get the full fraction of our louing husband *Christ I. Ius.* If the *Loue* of men compelled the Apostle to say to the *Corinthians*, *It is not yours, but you I seeke*, how much more should the *Loue* of God compell vs to say to our Lord, *It is not thy gift, but thy selfe*, O Lord! I long for: *thou art the portion of my soule*: If thou wouldst giue me all the workes of thine handes, yet shall I neuer haue comfort nor contentment, except thou giue mee thy selfe: therefore O thou whom my soule loueth! shew mee where thou feedest, where thou lyeest at noone; for why should I be as shee that turnes aside to the flockes of thy companions? Blessed is he that hungers, and thirsteth for thy righteousnesse, for he shall behold the face of his God, and be filled with his image; for in his presence is the fulnesse of ioy, and at his right hand, where are pleasures for euermore.

Cant. 2. 6.

Second tryall
of loue.

Psal. 119. 12

The second tryall of holy *Loue*, is Obedience, and a care to serue and honour the Lord in all estates and calliages. Preachers must be tryed by this rule, *Peter*, *Louest thou mee? feede my flocke*. *Gouernours* and *Counsellers* in your callings, must be tryed by this: Can you say with the godly *Gouernour David*, *I loue the Lord*? then will yee also say with him, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefites?* How shall I shew to the Lord my *Loue*? and what shall I do in my time, for the aduancement of his glory? If you loue the Lord, then be nothing Father to his Church; be saythfull aduancers of his Kingdome, wise prouisors to remooue the stumbling blockes that impede the course of his Gospell: If yee loue the Lord. Stand vp with *David*, and say, *Doe I not hate them*

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them, O Lord! that hate thee? and do I not earnestly con-
tend with them that rise up against thee? Surely I hate
them with unfeigned hatred, as if they were my utter
enemies. If yee honour the Lord as David did, the
Lord shall blesse you as he did David. David swore
vnto the Lord, that hee would not rest, till he found out a
place for the Lord, even an habitation for the mighty God
of Jacob. And the Lord sweares againe to David,
that of the fruite of his body, he should set upon his Throne
to raigne after him. But if otherwayes there be no-
thing in you, but a care to stablish your selues and
your houses, with the neglect of the glory of God;
then remember, the Curse of Shebna, and not the
Blesing of Eliachim, shall be vpon you: you shall
not be fastened as a Nayle in a sure place, but shall be
rowled and turned away like a Ball: The Lord shall
drive thee from thy station, and out of thy dwelling
place shall he destroy thee; for the wicked shall not
haue his desire; his thoughtes shall not be per-
formed, neither shall he be established on the earth,
but euill shall hunt him to destruction: the Lord shal
take thee, and plucke thee out of thy Tabernacle,
and roote thee out of the land of the lyuing: and
generally all of you in your callinges, remember the
value of your Christian *Loue*, must be tryed by the
same touchstone; not by your wordes, but by your
deedes. If any man loueth mee (sayth Christ) let him
keepe my Commandments. But heere also the hypo-
cric of this age is clearely discovered; In word
they pretend the *loue of God*, but in deed, they grieue
him with their transgressions: as the *Jewes*, they cal-
led him *King*, and bowed their knees before him,
but spatt in his face, and buffeted him: So the ba-
stard Christians of this age, call Christ, *their Lord*, and
bow their knee before him, yet they crucifie him,
and tramples his blood of the Couenant vnder their

Esa. 22.

Psal. 140. 13.

Psal. 52. 4.

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feete: they kisse him, and betray him with *Iudas*. It is but a Scepter of Reede they graunt to him, for they giue him no commaundement ouer their affections: wherefore, great is the controuersie which the Lord hath this day with the men of this generation.

Last tryall
of Loue,

The last tryall of *Loue*, whereof I will speake at this time (leauing many other) is, *Bountifulnesse*. *Loue* (sayth the Apoll) is *bountifull*. Experience prooues this: euery *Louer* is a bountifull bestower on them whom he loues. Yee loue your Backes, and spares not to cloath them, yea with excessiue Apparell: Yee loue your Bellies, and therefore are bountifull dayly to them in feeding them: Yee loue your Children, and therefore lettes them want nothing that is needfull for them: yea, yee loue your Beastes, and yee bestow largely on them; onely you say you loue the Lord, but wherein are yee bountifull toward him? It is true, that *in nothing can a man be profitable to the Almighty*, sayth *Iob*. But are there no workes which should so shine before men, that by them our heauenly Father may be glorified? Though workes can be no merites, yet are they your witnesses: and what haue you done to stande, when as you are dead, as witnesses of your *Loue* towards the Lord? Though your goodnesse extend not to the Lord, yet where is your delight that should be in his Saints, and excellent ones vpon earth? Where is your compassion and loue towards the Brethren? Are not the men of this age like the Fig-tree, that haue faire Leaues, but not so much as one Figge to giue Iesus in his hunger; hauing the shew of godlinesse, but hath denied the power thereof, rendring wordes ynough, but no fruites to adorne the glorious Gospel of our Lord Iesus. And so, (if wee might proceed) euery tryall of *Loue*, should discouer th'hypoc-

2. Tim. 3. 5.

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crisie and bastard Christianitie of the most part of Professors of this age. But, being forced at this time, to conclud; I turne mee toward you (whom I know, hath set your hearts to seeke the Lord) that I may leaue my last blessing behind mee vnto you, beeing no more purposed to speake to you from this place; to you, and to euery one of you, who can say with *Peter* in a sincere conscience, *Lord thou knowest I loue thee*: to you heere, in the name of God, I ratifie this priuiledge, *All things shall worke together for the best* vnto you. Faint not therefore (I beseech you) in the courle of Gouernelle, but *Be strong in the grace of our Lord Iesus Christ*: stand fast in the power of his might, praying to the Lord continually, that he would stablish that which he hath wrought in you, and bring it forward to perfection. And now I commend you to that grace of God, which is able to buyld you farther, and to giue you inheritaunce among them that are sanctified in *Christ Iesus*: to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all honour, prayse, and glory, for euer. Amen.

FINIS.

